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CITY'S QUICK RESPONSE TO SOIL INSTABILITY ISSUES SHOWS CARE FOR SAFETY AND PRUDENT PRECAUTIONS

The area of Soledad Mountain Road affected by soil instability today has a long history of similar problems. The City has been aware of these issues and has worked quickly to address this and all previous events. What follows is a brief synopsis of the City's history of prudent precautions and attention to safety in this area.

- The subdivision including the East side of Soledad Mountain Road and Desert View Drive was graded in early 1960's.
- In December of 1961, a naturally occurring landslide destroyed 7 homes under construction.
- The property was regraded and built out in the mid 1960's
- In 1989, new construction of a home started a slide on the 5600 block of Desert View Drive.
- Another landslide in 1994 affected the canyon below the 5800 block and was repaired by residents.
- In July of this year, residents on Soledad Mountain Rd. called the City to report pavement cracking.
- Evaluation by City geology staff revealed settlement features in paved areas.
- Testing by City Field Engineering staff in mid-July did not indicate voids below pavement. Subsequent water and gas leaks indicated earth movement.
- City engineering and geology staff continued to monitor the area throughout August. Cracking of street improvements continued and began affecting wider area on Soledad Mountain Road and Desert View Alley.
- The City has remained in regular contact with residents living in the area affected by the unstable soils.

- In September, continued cracking began forming a pattern consistent with landsliding.

- The water line along Soledad Mountain Rd. was “highlined” (i.e., replaced with an above ground pipeline) to avoid impacts due to earth movement.

- The speed limit along the affected portion of Soledad Mountain Rd. was reduced from 35 mph to 25 mph to reduce vibration due to faster moving traffic.

- City staff hired a geotechnical consultant to evaluate conditions and provide repair design

- Just prior to the street failure, the City was preparing new vehicle weight limits for the affected portion of Soledad Mountain Rd. hoping to reduce vibration/shocks from heavy vehicles. The City was also preparing a detour route for those vehicles.

- The geotechnical consultant retained by the City began work on October 2 to install “inclinometers” to determine the amount and limits of the movement. The consultant was also set to begin a soil investigation and analysis to help make future engineering recommendations on possible corrective actions.

- Police and Fire Departments were also notified and were well prepared to respond to evacuation and public safety needs following the street failure and landslide.

- On the evening of October 2, the City’s geologist and a Civil Engineer walked door to door and provided residents in the four houses most affected by the landslide with a recommendation against sleeping in their homes. The recommendation was made by the City’s contracted geotechnical consultant and was immediately conveyed to the residents.

- At approximately 7:30 am on October 3, the City’s geologist and staff from the City’s building inspection division began a thorough evaluation of the condition of private residents in the affected area.

- The City immediately notified residents throughout the area when it became aware of increasing slide conditions.

- At approximately 9 am, the catastrophic landslide began.

- The City’s Fire Department was called out to assist with evacuation and public safety notification at the first sign of a broader road failure.

- The City also mobilized its emergency response teams, activated it Emergency Operation Center and called on the American Red Cross to assist with meeting the needs of those evacuated from their homes.

- The City also immediately informed local media about the facts surrounding this incident and has remained available to update and inform media representatives as conditions have changed throughout the day.

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